

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5 1. A method of distributing software features to a computer being accessible with a plurality of different user profiles each one associated with a corresponding operating context, the method including the steps of:

providing a distribution package including at least one item indicative of an activity for enforcing a corresponding software feature on the computer, at least one activity being defined as a user activity associated with at least one user profile,

storing an indication of the at least one user activity on the computer,

accessing the computer with a current user profile, and

retrieving and executing each user activity associated with the current user profile in the corresponding operating context.

20 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one activity is defined as a global activity associated with all the user profiles, the method further including the steps of:

running a global agent outside the context associated with the current user profile,

25 executing each global activity under the control of the global agent,

running a user agent during a logon to the computer with the current user profile, each user activity being

retrieved and executed under the control of the user agent.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the global agent runs on the computer in a logoff condition.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein each software feature includes a global portion and a user portion necessary in each context for activating the software feature, a corresponding item being indicative of the global activity of enforcing the global portion and a further corresponding item being indicative of the user activity of enforcing the user portion for each associated user profile.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein each item includes a flag defining the corresponding activity as a global activity or a generic user activity, the method further including, for each generic user activity, the steps of:

storing an indication of a completion of the generic user activity for each user profile, and

verifying whether the generic user activity has been completed in the context associated with the current user profile, the generic user activity being executed in the context associated with the current user profile only if the result of the verification is negative.

6. The method according to claim 5, further including the steps of:

storing a global memory structure indicating a status of the global portion of each software feature,
storing a user memory structure for each user profile indicating a status of the user portion of each software feature in the corresponding context, and
5 verifying whether each generic user activity associated with the current user profile has been completed according to a comparison between the global memory structure and the corresponding user memory structure.

7. The method according to claim 5, further including the steps of:

storing an indication of each user profile allowed to have each software feature enforced, and
15 verifying whether the current user profile is

allowed to have the software feature corresponding to each generic user activity enforced, each generic user activity being executed only if the result of the verification is positive.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the computer is a client workstation of a network, the method further including the step of receiving the distribution package on the client workstation from a server
25 workstation through the network.

9. A computer program directly loadable into a working memory of a computer for performing the method of claim 1
30 when the program is run on the computer.

10. A program product including a computer readable medium on which the program of claim 9 is stored.

5 11. A software distribution application for use in a computer being accessible with a plurality of different user profiles each one associated with a corresponding operating context, the software distribution application including a distribution agent for receiving a distribution package including at least one item
10 indicative of an activity for enforcing a corresponding software feature on the computer, at least one activity being defined as a user activity associated with at least one user profile, and for storing an indication of the at least one user activity on the computer, and a user agent
15 for retrieving and executing each user activity associated with a current user profile in the corresponding operating context.

20 12. A system for distributing software features to a computer being accessible with a plurality of different user profiles each one associated with a corresponding operating context, the system including means for providing a distribution package including at least one item indicative of an activity for enforcing a
25 corresponding software feature on the computer, at least one activity being defined as a user activity associated with at least one user profile, means for storing an indication of the at least one user activity on the computer, means for accessing the computer with a current
30 user profile, and means for retrieving and executing each

user activity associated with the current user profile in the corresponding operating context.

13. A system for distributing software features to a computer being accessible with a plurality of different user profiles each one associated with a corresponding operating context, the computer including a distribution agent for receiving a distribution package including at least one item indicative of an activity for enforcing a corresponding software feature on the computer, at least one activity being defined as a user activity associated with at least one user profile, and for storing an indication of the at least one user activity on the computer, a logon module for accessing the computer with a current user profile, and a user agent for retrieving and executing each user activity associated with the current user profile in the corresponding operating context.

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